



RAILROAD STATION AT CHARLOTTE.

HISTORIC LEXINGTON AND ITS GREAT CHARM

LEXINGTON, Va., October 6, 1906. Lexington enjoys the distinction of having within her borders two justly famous educational institutions—the Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute.

The Washington and Lee University is the outgrowth of the Augusta Academy, which was established in Augusta county, Va., in 1749, by the Scotch-Irish immigrants who settled in the valley of Virginia from Pennsylvania. Changing its name and abode several times this school became fixed in 1790, with the title Liberty Hall, in the immediate vicinity of Lexington. The school was incorporated in 1782 by the legislature of Virginia as Liberty Hall Academy. The name was changed to Washington Academy in 1798, in honor of a generous gift by George Washington. The name was changed to Washington College in 1813. In August, 1865, Gen. Robert E. Lee was elected president of the institution, and he served until his death in 1870. The following year the name of the school was changed to Washington and Lee University. Gen. Lee's son, Gen. G. W. Custis Lee, succeeded him as president of the university. He in turn was succeeded in 1887 by former Postmaster Gen. William L. Wilson. The incumbent is Dr. George H. Denny.

One of the attractions at the University is the Lee chapel planned by Gen. Lee, and the Lee mausoleum, in which repose the ashes of Gen. Lee and several members of his family. The office occupied by Gen. Lee is in the basement of the chapel, and it remains to this day just as it was when Gen. Lee left it the last time, shortly before his death.

Within the past few years the scope of the University has been greatly enlarged by the erection of handsome and commodious halls and other buildings. Chief among them are the Tucker Memorial Hall, a modern stone structure erected as a home for the school of law in memory of Mr. John Randolph Tucker, the distinguished constitutional lawyer, who had been dean of the law school for nearly a quarter of a century previous to his death in 1897. Engineering Hall, a home for the departments of physics and civil engineering, was completed in 1904. The erection of the building was made possible by the gift of \$25,000 by Mr. William H. Reed and other friends of Chicago. Another building completed in 1904 was the new dormitory, which has been full of students since the rooms were ready for occupancy.

The present enrollment of the school is 406, which is the largest in the history of the university, with the exception of one year with Gen. Lee, when the attendance ran up to 411. A large number of new men came in that year at the beginning of the school term just after Christmas.

The art gallery at Washington and Lee contains many rare and valuable paintings, some of them having belonged to George Washington and adorned the walls of his home at Mt. Vernon.

On a commanding position overlooking North river, and with a level expanse of hill and valley lying in the distance, the Virginia Military Institute occupies a beautiful site in the northern part of Lexington. The germ of this famous military school was a state arsenal maintained here until 1820, when by act of the state legislature the Virginia Military Institute was established. The president of the first board of visitors was Col. Claude Crozet, graduate of the Polytechnic School of France, a soldier under Napoleon in the Russian campaign of 1812, and subsequently a professor in the United States Military Academy at West Point. Gen. Francis E. Smith, a distinguished graduate of West Point, was elected the first vice president, and for fifty years he remained at the head of the institute, retiring in 1889. Under his wise guidance the school grew in public favor, until now it is recognized throughout the country as second only to West Point. Indeed, many of her graduates occupy offices in the United States army. The efficient military training imparted at this school was exemplified at the battle of New Market, Va., during the civil war, when on the fifteenth of May, 1862, the corps of cadets faced the deadly fire of federal troops and lost over fifty killed and wounded out of an aggregate of two hundred and fifty. The graduates of this school have won distinction in all the professions and vocations of life. Upon the roll of her academic staff are to be found the names of Stonewall Jackson and Matthew Fontaine Maury.

There is at present an enrollment of 300 stalwart young men at the institute. The superintendent is Gen. Scott Shipp, who succeeded Gen. Smith in 1890, and who led the cadets in the battle of New Market.

Within recent years several important buildings have been erected at the insti-

tute, chief among them being the Stonewall Jackson Hall, the Smith Memorial Hall, the Administration building, and several new residences for professors.

Upon the parade ground in front of the Stonewall Jackson Hall stands the statue, "Virginia Mourning Her Dead," the work of the distinguished sculptor, Sir Moses Ezekiel of Rome, Italy, himself a graduate of the school, and one of the immortal New Market boys.

The cadets are under the strictest military discipline at all times, and the various companies present an imposing appearance every Sunday as they march through the streets to church.

Lexington is a town of nearly four thousand population, and is situated in the midst of beautiful natural environments. The diversified landscape of hill and vale is surrounded by mountains in the distance. It is the county seat of Rockbridge county, which takes its name from the Natural bridge, fourteen miles south of Lexington. This curious bridge, more than two hundred feet high, spans a chasm otherwise inaccessible for some distance up or down the little creek which runs beneath the arch of the bridge. Thousands of tourists visit the bridge every year. The property once belonged to Thomas Jefferson, and a tradition is that Washington once visited this wonderful bridge and carved his name high on one of the side walls of the abutment.

Lexington has few manufacturing enterprises, its business life depending mainly on the educational institutions here and the farming community surrounding. As an evidence of prosperity the three strong banks of Lexington have on deposit nearly one million dollars. The town enjoys an excellent electric light system, has a modern water system with capacious reservoir, miles of sewerage and an efficient health department. The town and county for some years have prohibited the sale of liquor under local option laws. The largest enterprise near Lexington is the Rockbridge Lime and Stone Company, who operate large lime kilns just outside the corporate limits of Lexington, and also manufacture from lime a patent process fertilizer. At Lexington and throughout the county roller flouring mills are in operation.

Lexington has many beautiful homes. Notable among them are the magnificent residences of Mr. Henry St. George Tucker, president of the Jamestown Exposition Company and late dean of the George Washington Law School of Washington, D. C., and Attorney General William A. Anderson. The home of President George H. Denny of Washington and Lee University was built for Gen. Robert E. Lee and occupied by him until his death.

Among the distinguished men who have resided in Lexington where Generals Lee and Stonewall Jackson, both of whom are buried here; Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury, whose request was that his body after death should be borne through Goshen pass, eighteen miles distant from Lexington while the mountain laurel was in bloom; Gov. James McDowell; Gov. John Letcher, Virginia's war general; Residing here now in the quietness of old age is Col. John M. Brooke, for many years in the United States navy, who accompanied Commodore Perry to Japan in the discussion of opening up that country to foreign commerce, and who is the inventor of a deep-sea sounding apparatus.

On the roll of great men of Rockbridge we find such names as Cyrus H. McCormick, inventor of the McCormick reaper, and the first public test of his machine was made in sight of Lexington; Bishop William Taylor of the Methodist Church, who spent many years of his life Christianizing the African; Gen. Sam Houston of Texas fame, who was the first president of the republic of Texas.

Lexington is a conservative community. The town and county were originally settled by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, and the leading characteristics of this sturdy race are still prominent in their descendants. Shut in somewhat from the bustling world beyond, they have been content to pursue the even tenor of their way regardless of the opinions of "outsiders." Of a deeply religious nature, they build churches next after their homes and school houses. Clanish to a degree, a roll call of the residents of Rockbridge will reveal the fact that many families are related. In some neighborhoods the intermarriage of families is noticeable.

Buena Vista, an enterprising town of more than three thousand population, situated eight miles from Lexington, is the product of "boom days" in Rockbridge and this part of Virginia. That city is the most cosmopolitan community of Rockbridge. Many of its most substantial citizens are of northern birth, and they have transplanted to Virginia much of the push and enterprise of their native states. As a result Buena Vista is a beehive of industrial progress. Among its enterprises are two banks, an iron furnace, paper mill, tannery, extract works, creamery, saddle factory.

The Southern Seminary, a young woman's college, is located at Buena Vista, and the attendance is good.

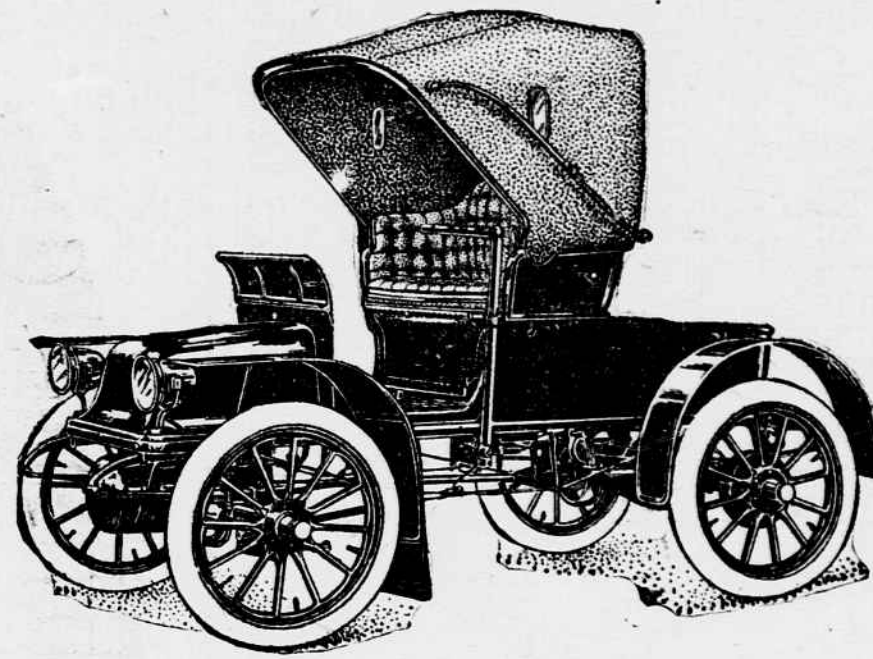
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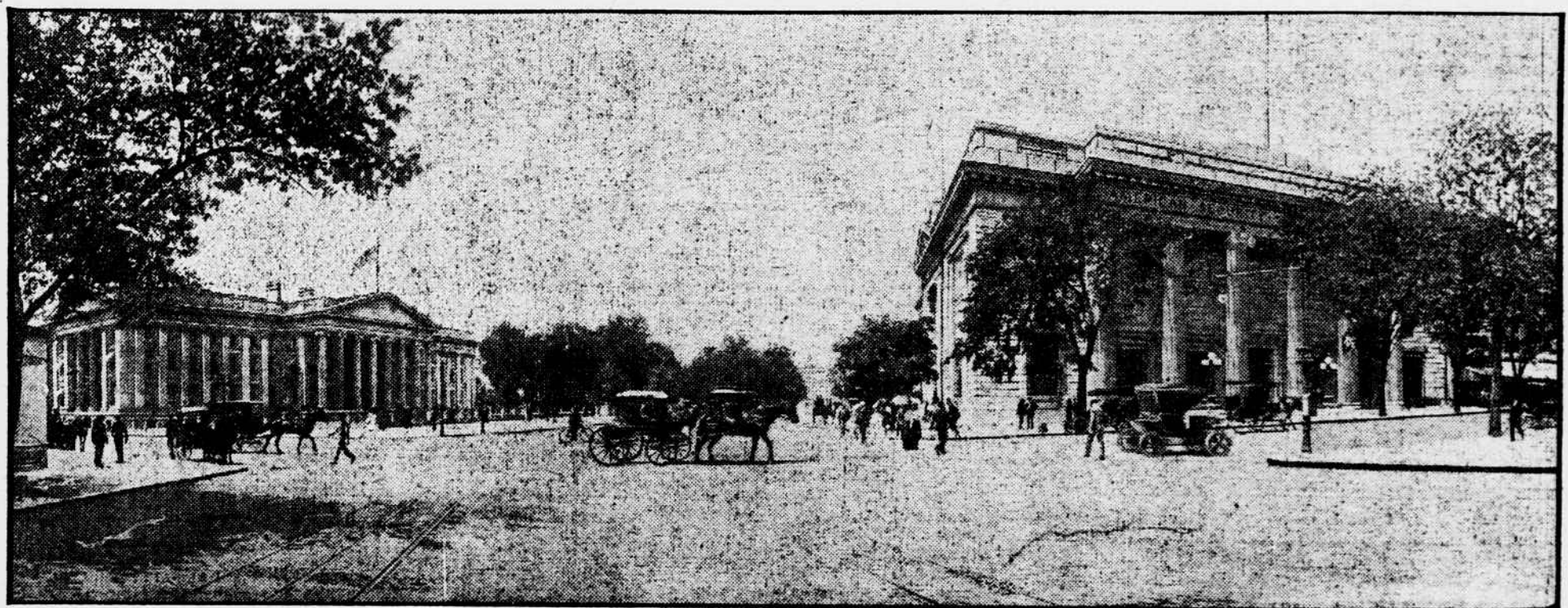
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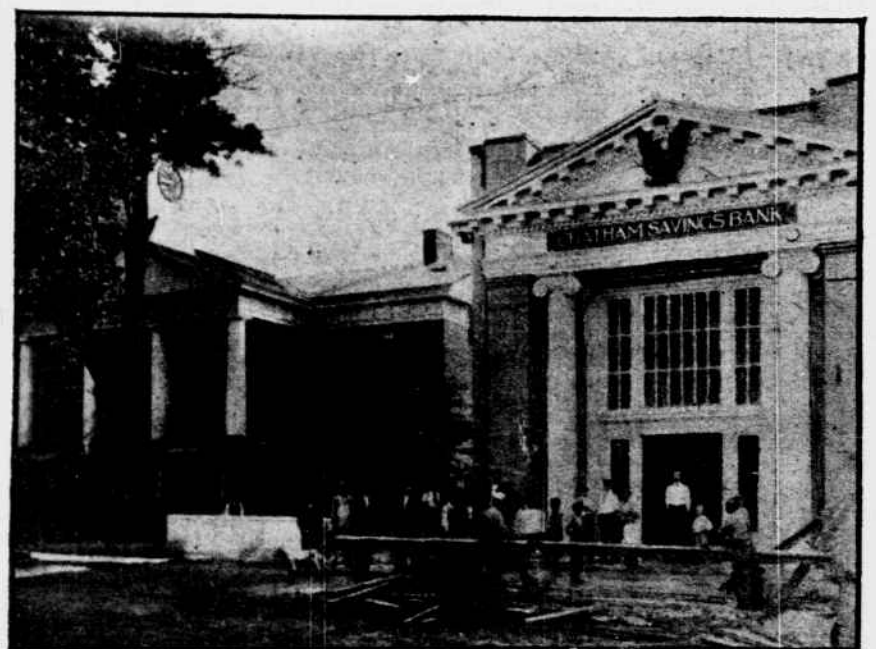
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